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Dear Tom:

It is with regret that I write to inform you of my disappointment with Madhusudan Katti's contributions to the Leadership in Public Science Chancellor's Faculty Excellence Program cluster. Although Madhu's problems are many, I'm focusing here on his failures to meet responsibilities in the co-taught course, NR 595 Introduction to Public Science. This course is key to the graduate program we will be submitting for approval later this semester. Madhu, Caren Cooper and I first co-taught this course in Spring, 2017, during the first year of the cluster; I acted as coordinator, which was a natural extension of my role as overall cluster coordinator. I report here on last year's (second) offering, and on our failed attempt to offer the course again this year.

Intro to Public Science, Spring, 2018

The second time through the course expanded to incorporate our two new cluster members, K.C. Busch and Katie Mack, although as untenured faculty receiving no credit for the course, we also aimed to protect their time. My expectation was course coordination responsibilities would fall to the two instructors of record in CNR—Madhu and Caren. At an meeting early in Fall semester, it was decided to segment the course into units, each taught by one or two of us. When no action was taken to go from that general decision to a working syllabus, I stepped in and began coordinating, assigning topics to weeks and people:

> Weeks 1-2: Introduction: all
>
> Weeks 3-4-5: Open Science: CC & JG
>
> Week 6: Ethics: JG
>
> Weeks 7-8: Science Communication: KCB
>
> Weeks 9-10: Science Communication: MK, assisted by KM
>
> Weeks 11-12: Citizen Science: CC
>
> Weeks 13-14: Citizen Science: MK
>
> Week 15: Conclusions: all

I also advertised the course through the cluster's listserv, to the Science Communication club, and directly to various colleagues in our network.

Madhu put in the request to turn a Moodle site on, and also produced the "boilerplate" policies for the syllabus, using (as I understand it) a CNR online template. At that point, his contributions stopped.

Since the Moodle remained unorganized, I constructed it, setting up the gradebook, laying out the units and adding reading materials. Madhu did not contribute to designing the two weeks of introduction, so Caren and I put that together, as well as our joint Open Science section. KC got readings in for her section in December as well, so when the course opened it was planned in detail through the end of 8th week—Spring Break.

By the end of Spring Break, Madhu had still not set up his two assigned weeks. Instead, the readings were emailed to students less than 24 hours before they were due:

> Week 9-Day 1: 21 hours prior to the class meeting time.
>
> 9-2: 19 hours prior.
>
> 10-1: No readings; 2 guest lecturers, one of whom I had organized.
>
> 10-2: 15 hours prior; these were conveyed by email by Katie, together with a note that because of the late notice, students didn't actually have to read them.

It also appeared to me that Madhu was unprepared for these four classes.

In the next unit, despite the official division of responsibilities, Caren set up all the readings and exercises and led class for 7 of the 8 periods.

Grades in the class were based on a final project and participation in each unit. Madhu was responsible for collating feedback on the students' final project proposals. He did open a shared doc in a timely fashion, to which Caren and I contributed immediately. Madhu did not synthesize the feedback and get it back to students for another ten days. Madhu did not submit participation grades for his unit, even after reminders. I had been forced to ask him to cover a class for me early in the semester, when I was called out of town for a funeral. Although he was present for the class, he never provided feedback and a grade for the student presentations that day. I graded the final projects, and then because the gradebook was so fragmentary gave all students an "A" in the class.

Intro to Public Science, scheduled for Spring, 2019

By the end of the course, I naturally felt somewhat aggrieved that I, who had done about half the work, was receiving no official credit for it; while Madhu, who had poorly led five class days, was having it count towards his teaching load. However, I also realized that I bore some of the responsibility; I had been enabling Madhu's irresponsibility by covering for his lapses. At the end of Spring semester, 2018, I therefore started an email discussion to (1) specify the responsibilities of the course coordinator and (2) decline that position myself. Madhu undertook to coordinate the course, and also to get it moved from the "special topics" number it had been under to a permanent place.

Madhu did not contact us, his cluster colleagues, to discuss the course, nor did he start the paperwork for formal course approval. A few weeks before registration began in October, I asked all cluster members for descriptions of the courses they were teaching, for our every-semester advertising email/webpage. Madhu did not reply. I nevertheless included the Intro course on the general list anyways, using the prior year's description.

When there was no visible progress on the course by early November, I added the course as the main topic of discussion for the next cluster meeting. Madhu told me that he would be unable to attend due to other responsibilities, so that meeting was cancelled and the discussion

took place at the end of November. At that time, Madhu laid out a vision for the course that took it in a new direction. While I personally did not endorse that direction, I was happy to see forward movement of any kind. He also mentioned that the course hadn't enrolled many students, and that therefore he was thinking of cancelling it. I argued strongly against that, pointing out that the course hadn't yet been advertised, and stressing it's importance for the emerging Public Science grad program. The Intro course is very likely to be the entry course for the program, so if it is cancelled it means that when we start up the program next year, we will not have any students ready to go. The meeting ended with an agreement that Madhu would advertise the course and start contacting us to arrange for the roles we would play in it.

Madhu did not advertise the course. After I reminded him of the importance of recruiting, he sent an email in the last week of Fall semester to the cluster faculty and students (most of whom had taken the course already) asking them to advertise the course broadly. No course description was included—in particular, no mention of the new direction he was planning.

Nor did Madhu contact any of us, his cluster colleagues, to discuss our participation in the class.

I was deeply chagrined, but therefore not surprised, that in the first week of this semester, Spring, 2019, Madhu announced that he was working with you, Tom, to cancel the class due to low enrollment, conveying the impression that you and Ken Zagacki were supportive of this decision. I again registered my objections, while submitting to the *fait accompli*.

Conclusion

One of the saddest things about Madhu's persistent inability to meet his responsibilities is the way that it prevents us, his cluster colleagues, from helping him. When he doesn't get started on a task until well after the last minute, there is no way that we can support him with advice or assistance. The most poignant instance of this was not from the badly-taught and now aborted Intro course, but from the limited submission S-STEM grant proposal he supposedly led (but which I suspect was written by another colleague), also in Spring, 2018. In that case, the first draft of the proposal was not circulated until 48 hours before the submission was due, denying the rest of us a meaningful opportunity to help make it better.

My hope is that these remarks are helpful to you as you try to mentor Madhu not so much to improved performance, but just to meet his core responsibilities as a faculty member and cluster colleague,

Sincerely,

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